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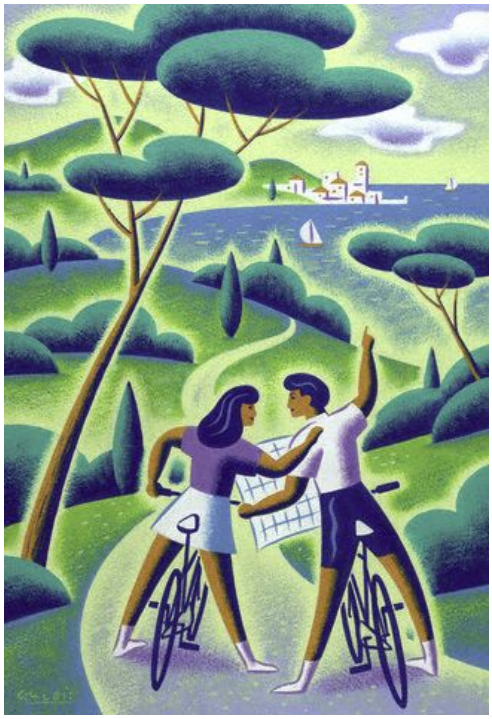
BADGER STATE TRAIL MASTER PLAN



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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Acknowledgments

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

MAPS

Chapter One – Introduction and Executive Summary

This plan proposes to establish a 40-mile State Trail on the former Illinois Central Railroad corridor between Madison and the Illinois state line. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) authorized acquisition of this corridor in April 2000. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has signed a lease with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Southern Wisconsin Rail Transit Commission allowing the development and operation of a recreational trail. The DOT still owns fee title to the corridor. The proposed name for this abandoned rail corridor is the Badger State Trail.

This trail will provide a regional connection to such trails as the Capital City State Trail, Military Ridge State Trail, and the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. In addition, the Badger State Trail and the Sugar River Trail intersect in Monticello thus making the Badger State Trail a spoke in a much larger hub of regional trails. South of Monroe, the trail will reach the Illinois border and then continue south to the Jane Addams Trail in Freeport, Illinois. From Freeport, Illinois the trail will find connections to the 500 mile Grand Illinois Trail System.

DNR proposes to develop, manage and operate this trail, which is expected to attract 100,000 to 175,000 users annually. Proposed trail uses include biking, hiking, rollerblading, equestrian, winter ATVing and snowmobiling. The trail will also provide for activities such as berry picking, bird watching, and general nature study.

Development of the proposed year-round multi-purpose state trail is estimated to cost $4.4 million including tunnel reconstruction and repairs, bridge decking and railing, trail surfacing, trail heads, parking areas, fencing and signing. To date, over $600,000 has been spent on bridge decking and railing, regulatory signing, and brushing of the trail corridor.

There has been strong support for development of the trail from recreational user groups and most local units of government have been supportive of converting the use from rail to a recreational trail.

Chapter Two– Management, Development and Use

Chapter two describes the management, development and use of the Badger State Trail. The content of this chapter is compatible with the property designation, the goals, the property capabilities, and the regional analysis.

Goals

- Provide a 40-mile recreational trail for pedestrians and bicyclists with winter use to include snowmobiles, limited ATV use and other appropriate trail activities,
- Provide a portion of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail,
- Act as link to other state and local trail systems, while connecting communities to outdoor recreation within a larger regional trail network.

Property Designation

This trail is proposed as a State Trail (under the provisions of Wisconsin State Statute 23.175 and DNR Administrative Code Chapter 45.09). The proposed name for this trail corridor is the Badger State Trail.

Land Management Classification

The Land Management Classifications are assigned according to Section NR 44.06(8) and NR 44.07(7) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The proposed Land Management Classification for the Badger State Trail is Recreation Management Area Type 4 Recreational Use Setting. The Trail will be a fully developed Trail as defined by Wisconsin Administrative Code Section NR 44.07(3)(h).

Project Boundary

The railroad corridor proposed for the development of this trail system encompasses approximately 40 miles in Dane and Green counties; the former Illinois Central Gulf Railroad. On the north end, the trail begins in Madison at Lovell Road, from Madison southward, the corridor passes through the City of Fitchburg, Township of Basco, the Village of Belleville, Township of Exeter, the Village of Monticello, the City of Monroe and the Township of Clarno (see Map A, Proposed Trail and Facilities Map)

Proposed Uses and Development

It is recommended that the Badger State Trail be developed to accommodate biking and hiking; snowmobiling, and in specific areas rollerblading, equestrian use and winter ATV use.

The trail will be divided into Northern and Southern sections. The northern section will run from the City of Madison limits to Sun Valley Parkway. The southern section will run from Sun Valley Parkway to the Illinois border.

Overall, development of the Badger State Trail includes decking and railings of bridges, as well as surfacing the trail tread with a 10-foot-wide layer of either finely crushed limestone or black top pavement. Parking lots, rest areas, and other associated facilities will be developed by the DNR or in cooperation with local partners. There are currently 43 at-grade or street crossings, 20 grade separated crossings, and 30 stream or ditch crossings.

The development and designated used for each trail section is discussed in more detail below.

Northern Section – Lovell Road to Sun Valley Parkway (Dane County, City of Fitchburg) 7.1 miles

Existing Facilities: The DNR's responsibility for the Badger State Trail begins at Lovell Road in the City of Fitchburg where it links with Madison's Southwest Path and the Capital City State Trail. There is a 12 car parking area on the Capital City State Trail ¼ mile east from the Badger State Trail for user access that is owned and operated by the City of Madison.

Objective: Provide for year round passive recreation on 7.1 miles of trail, while providing a year round commuter link to and from the Madison metro area.

Proposed Northern Section Uses:

The following trail uses are proposed within the Northern Section:

- Biking
- Hiking / walking
- Rollerblading
- Nature study

Proposed Development:

This section of the Badger State Trail from Lovell Rd to Sun Valley Parkway is expected to be heavily used by bikers commuting to and from Madison. This section is proposed to be 10 feet wide, surfaced with blacktop pavement that will include mileage markers installed starting at Lovell Rd and going to Sun Valley Parkway. It is also proposed that a kiosk be built at the existing parking lot that will allow for a description of the Badger State Trail and also other trails within the area.

Cooperative options should be explored with other units of government for the plowing of the trail for winter commuters. Snowmobiling would not be allowed within this section of the trail due to the damage that can occur from the carbide steel studs on the tracks of the snowmobiles. Other motorized uses will not be permitted within the section due to the expected high volume of pedestrian traffic from the City of Madison and surrounding communities. From Sun Valley Parkway, bikers will be able to access county and local roads designated in the Dane County's Bike plan[1] as suitable for bicycle traffic.

[1] Dane County Bike Plan , 2002; Department of Transportation Bike Plan , 2005

This trail corridor crosses CTH PD (McKee Road) in the City of Fitchburg, which is a 4 lane, divided highway that connects CTH D (Fish Hatchery Road) and US Hwy. 18/151. It is proposed that a pedestrian bridge be built crossing CTH PD which will allow for safe travel across an increasingly busy highway. Other established bike routes also exist that will also allow for crossing Hwy PD.

It is proposed that a trail spur be developed at the intersection of Sun Valley Parkway to accommodate user access to the Village of Paoli. The intersection is a grade separated crossing (bridge) with Sun Valley Parkway going over the top of the Badger State Trail corridor. A minor boundary adjustment will be needed to acquire lands from the adjacant landowner to develop an access ramp from the trail up to the roadway.

Southern Section – Sun Valley Parkway (Dane County) to the Illinois State Line (Green County) 32.9 Miles

Existing Facilities: The Village of Belleville currently operates Library Park adjacent to the Badger State Trail corridor. Library Park offers 5 parking spaces, picnic tables, a historic library building and a gazebo.

There is a ¼ mile long curved railroad tunnel in Exeter Township that has a bend which limits visibility, however no improvements are planned to correct this problem. The interior tunnel brick lining is in poor condition and approximately one-half of the tunnel will need to be re-lined.

In the Village of Monticello there is a DNR managed rest area providing water, parking and pit toilet facilities. Near the rest area, the Village of Monticello has restored the railroad depot and now operates a hostel.

Within the City of Monroe, Twining Park is located adjacent to the trail corridor. Twining Park provides shelters, toilets, parking, play areas, volleyball area, a basketball court, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and a bandshell.

Objective: Provide for year round recreation on 32.9 miles of trail, while allowing for snowmobile and limited ATV use during the winter.

Proposed Southern Section Uses:

- Biking
- Hiking / walking
- Snowmobiling
- Nature study
- Ice Age Trail designation
- Equestrian
- Winter ATV

Proposed Southern Section Development*:*

It is proposed that the surfacing from Sun Valley Parkway to the Wisconsin/Illinois State line be limestone screenings and that the trail width will be 10 feet. Mile makers will be installed and limited signage will be developed at major road crossings.

Library Park in the Village of Belleville, adjacent to the Badger State Trail, is located in the heart of the Village. There is a small vacant lot between the trail, Post Office and the new Library. Working with the Village of Belleville, a cooperative rest / trailhead area should be developed in this area to provide 10 additional parking spaces, toilets, a small shelter and a rest area for trail users. In addition a Kiosk should be installed that will provide information about the trail and other features.

The ¼ mile long tunnel located in Exeter Township is a historic structure, although it is not yet on the Register of Historic Places. The State Historical Society was consulted to determine the best course of action for the needed repairs to the tunnel. The interior of the tunnel will be relined with stamped concrete to give the appearance of a brick lining. The entrance of the tunnel will remain historic in appearance. The tunnel will be closed during winter months for preservation and safety by means determined by the DNR. No lighting will be installed inside the tunnel as is the case with all State owned trail tunnels on trails.

The Sugar River Trail runs parallel to the Badger State Trail in the Village of Monticello between CTH EE and CTH C It is proposed to combine the two trails together as one for approximately one mile through the Village limits. This simplification of trails will allow a user to access either trail once leaving the Village limits. South of Monticello, near CTH C the Badger State Trail splits off again and goes south towards Monroe and the Sugar River Trail goes east to Broadhead and the DNR managed rest area in the Village of Monticello.

Heading south from the Village of Monticello there are 7 road crossings that will be will need to be signed as intersections. One intersection, Gutzmer Road will need to be specially marked and signed as there are poor sight lines at this crossing.

It is proposed that special markings be required at the STH 11 crossing. This state highway is a 4-lane divided highway with vehicle speeds reaching 65 mph but visibility is excellent in both directions for both trail users and traffic. There should be markings along the pavement with bike crossing signage developed along the freeway corridor. In addition, signage warning the trail users about this high speed traffic crossing will be placed at the intersection.

The City of Monroe operates Twining Park located adjacent to the Badger State Trail corridor at the intersection of 4th Avenue. The Department will work cooperatively with the City to ensure trail users have access to the city park facilities available at the park and it is proposed that a trailhead be established at this park. The City is also proposing to develop a loop connector trail from the Badger State Trail corridor through the downtown area and back to the Badger State Trail.

The trail crosses a busy Hwy 69 twice in the City limits. This route is established within the City limits and no additional at grade work is required.

The unincorporated Village of Clarno is the last stop before entering the State of Illinois and the Jane Addams Trail. It is proposed that a 5-10 car parking area with minimal facilities such as pit toilet, hand pump well and information kiosk be developed.

Special Trail Use Designations

Ice Age National Scenic Trail (Townships of Fitchburg, Oregon and Montrose)

It is proposed that the section of trail from Purcell Rd to Frenchtown Rd in the Townships of Fitchburg, Oregon and Montrose be designated to serve as part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. This 6 mile section of trail will be used as a connector to other Ice Age Trail segments located near the trail with this section of trail approximately 6 miles in length. Signage designating this section as Ice Age Trail will be developed along this corridor. If lands become available, the Ice Age Trail may be moved onto the preferred route identified in the Ice Age Trail - Dane County Land Protection Plan[2].

Snowmobile Use

Snowmobiling will be allowed on most of the southern section of the trail when 6" or more of snow is on the trail. Sections not allowing this use include the ¼ mile long tunnel in the Town of Exeter and in the City of Monroe. Alternative routes will need to be established on private lands to make connections back to the trail. Snowmobiling is allowed on the Jane Adams Trail which will allow for up to 45 miles of snowmobiling on these two trails.

Winter ATV Use

It is proposed that winter ATV use be allowed on the 11 mile section from Monroe to Monticello. This use will be allowed as a 3 year trial period upon approval of this plan. Within the trail period the following conditions will be monitored:

- The use can only occur from Dec. 1 – March 15,
- The use can only be used when snowmobile use is not allowed,
- The trail surface must be frozen,
- The use will not be allowed off the trail tread,
- The use will not be allowed upon the Sugar River State Trail.

At the end of the 3 year trial period an assessment on environmental damage or enforcement problems will be made on the impacts of this use. The DNR will then make a determination on continued use.

Equestrian Use

Within this southern section, an equestrian trail may be accommodated as a separate trail tread within the corridor from Bellville to the Town of Clarno as a part of a larger equestrian trail

[2] National Park Service & Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation – Dane County Land Protection Plan

system developed on local roads and private lands. Up to 2 miles of trail will be allowed once 6 miles of publicly accessible trail has been established outside the corridor. This 2 mile section will be developed only after the 6 miles have been established and are open for public use. Carts will not be allowed on this corridor tread as part of this use and equestrians will not be allowed in the Tunnel. The Badger State Trail corridor topography is a mix of upland, wetland, rock outcroppings, cattle passes and river/creek crossings making it impractical to develop a contiguous trail within the corridor. The equestrian trail tread will not be developed in designated wetlands, or prairie areas containing endangered or threatened species. In an effort to maintain user safety and provide a high-quality user experience horses will not be permitted as a combined use on the bike trail surface.

In summary the following facilities, developments and uses are proposed:

Table 1: Proposed Developments

New Development	Northern Section	Southern Section	Total
Trail Grade	7.1 miles of blacktop	32.9 miles of crushed limestone	40 miles
Tunnel Refurbishment		.25 mile	.25 miles
Parking spaces		20	20
Trailheads	1	2	3
Shelters		2	2
Wells		2	2
Toilets		2	2
Grade Separated Crossings	1		1

Table 2: Proposed Use Mileages and Locations

Proposed Use	Mileage	Section
Hiking	40	Madison – Town of Clarno
Biking	40	Madison – Town of Clarno
Nature Study /Bird Watching	40	Madison – Town of Clarno
Rollerblading	7.1	Madison to Sun Valley Parkway
Snowmobile	32.9	Sun Valley Parkway to Town of Clarno (excluding tunnel and Monroe)
Ice Age Trail Designation	6	Purcell Rd to Frenchtown Rd (Town of Montrose)
Equestrian	2	Bellville – Town of Clarno (excluding tunnel)
Winter ATV	11	Village of Monticello to Monroe

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Objective: *Provide a cleared recreation corridor while reducing the spread of invasive and exotic species, provide shade and maintain vistas of the distant landscape.*

The proposed vegetative management will use various methods, including cutting, mowing, and limited use of herbicides. Limited prescribed burns will be concentrated in the areas south of Monticello and to north of Belleville. In some of these areas there are state-threatened pale purple coneflowers, roundstem foxglove, and kitten tails along with several other more common prairie species found within the right-of-way. While it is not the goal to create new or enhanced prairie areas, attempts will be made where possible to establish prairie demonstration areas.

The surrounding vegetation has encroached onto the corridor especially by the invader species of cherry, aspen, and boxelder with an understory of sumac, willow, and berry bushes. Areas also have invasive/exotic species like garlic mustard, honeysuckle, etc.

Part of the proposed management strategy is to request as a part of the biennial budget process money for habitat management that would support inventory work, invasive species management, natural community restorations, prescribed burning, seeding, and erosion control. More could be accomplished by creating partnerships with local support groups and the formation of a Friends Group to establish a base of volunteers.

WILDLIFE / HABITAT MANAGEMENT

A variety of wildlife management techniques will be used throughout the trail corridor as personnel, funding, volunteers, and contributions allow. For instance, artificial nesting boxes will be erected and maintained within the trail corridor near wetlands, streams, and rivers for use by wood ducks, hooded mergansers, screech owls, and other birds. Bluebird houses will also be erected along more open areas such as in the stretches of grassland.

Boundary Adjustments

It is proposed that only minor boundary adjustments be made to allow for connections to local road networks. When needed, these adjustments can be done through the normal boundary adjustment process.

Operations Policies

Operational costs associated with the Badger State Trail are the responsibility of the DNR. Based on past experience for other trails, annual operations costs range on average from $1,500 to $2,000 per mile per year. Therefore, DNR annual operation costs are estimated at $65,000 per year. This includes 1 LTE Ranger – Enforcement position and 2 LTE Laborer positions to provide visitor protection, law enforcement and maintenance as well as supplies and services for trail maintenance.

Education and Interpretation

Development along the trail corridor will include interpretive signs and displays to explain the cultural, historical, and natural features found within and adjacent to the trail corridor. Major points of interests are the historic bridge in Belleville, the curved tunnel in the Town of Exeter and the site of the Historic Woolen Mill in Monticello.

Access and Use by Persons with Disabilities

All trail facilities including drinking fountains, rest rooms, parking, telephones, etc., will be accessible to people with disabilities. The trail, because of its nearly level grade, will be very accessible to and usable by those who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids. The use of motorized conveyances (other than wheelchairs) for people with severe mobility impairments will be evaluated on an individual basis. Nature interpretation labels and/or brochures will have large print to insure readability by those with visual impairments. The Department's Design Standards and Federal Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) will be followed in facility construction and trail programs and services.

Chapter Three – Background Information

The corridor for the Badger State Trail encompasses approximately 40 miles in Dane and Green Counties. On the North end, the trail begins in the City of Madison (pop. 217,935), goes south through the City of Fitchburg (pop. 22,030), Basco (unincorporated), the Village of Belleville (pop. 1,891), Exeter (unincorporated), the Village of Monticello (pop. 1,147), the City of Monroe (pop. 10,973), and Clarno (unincorporated).*

At the Wisconsin-Illinois border, the corridor connects with the recently completed Jane Addams Trail in Illinois. This trail is part of the 500-mile Grand Illinois Trail System, a network of trails throughout Northern Illinois.

Overall there are 43 at-grade road or street crossings, 19 grade separations, 30 stream crossings, and one separated intersection with another railroad grade.

This regional analysis details the natural and built amenities that comprise this trail corridor and the region that surrounds this.

History

The Illinois Central Railroad Company was incorporated in July 1886, and construction was begun on the branch line from Madison, WI to Freeport, IL. The cost of building the line had been estimated at $780,000, but as work progressed, unforeseen difficulties were encountered and the actual cost rose to $1,350,000.

Belleville's yellow brick depot was built in 1888, along with the completion of the tunnel four miles south of the village. The Exeter tunnel was built on a curve, one-quarter mile long, with construction starting at both ends, and an engineering feat resulted as they met exactly in the middle.

The Illinois Central Railroad Company operated within this corridor hauling grain, livestock, other freight as well as passenger trains. Passenger trains ran daily up until the 1960's and freight trains continued to operate until 1976.

Chronology of Property's Establishment and Development

The Illinois Central Railroad Company filed a petition for abandonment with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) on November 5, 1976. The Department of Natural Resources inspected the Wisconsin segment of the rail corridor and completed a feasibility study in December 1976. After the ICC approved the abandonment, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) purchased the corridor and a short line operation (Wisconsin and Calumet Railroad) continued to provide rail service. Upon notice that the short line operation was terminated, the corridor was again inspected on August 15, 1991 by Department staff for a possible conversion to trail use.

* Population numbers from: WI Department of Administration, www.doa.state.wi.us/docs_view2.asp?docid3583

It wasn't until February 1997 that the WDOT and the South Central Wisconsin Rail Transit Commission (SCWRTC) decided to commence negotiations to convert the Monroe to Madison segment of the corridor to a recreational trail under the federal Rails to Trail act.

SCWRTC arrived at the conclusion of converting the use of the corridor after extensive review of the past twenty year history of rail usage and a railroad shipper/business survey they conducted jointly in October/November 1996 with the operating carrier, the Wisconsin and Calumet Railroad, and the WDOT.

The findings of that survey were that freight traffic on this railroad corridor had diminished to such low levels (less that twenty car loads a year) that it is uneconomical to continue to maintain the line as an operating railroad. Community efforts to market their industrial parks on the rail line did not emphasize the potential availability of shipments by rail – it was not considered essential. Rehabilitation of the track and bridges to sustain a reasonable railroad (Class II – 25 mph) operation would cost approximately $20 million.

In 1997, the Department of Natural Resources began to negotiate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the South Central Regional Rail Transit Commission to convert the corridor from rail to trail use. After a feasibility study with public input, the Department reached agreement with the parties in March 2000.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE TRAIL CORRIDOR

(Excerpts for this section are taken from the Jane Addams web site at http://www.janeaddamstrail.com and adopted for this trail corridor)

Flora

Generally speaking most of the plants seen along the trail corridor reflect the many years of disturbance and various attempts to manage the area while it served as a rail right-of-way. Following cessation of management to keep the tracks clear for trains, numerous plants have invaded the right-of-way. Today one would find black cherry and box-elder trees in every section while hackberry and white mulberry are nearly as common. In all, at least 27 species of trees are found with in the trail corridor.

Below the trees there exists a layer of woody shrubs, comprising of at least 25 different species. Poison Ivy, Honeysuckle, Elderbery and Black Raspberry are ubiquitous.

There are also some 120 species of herbaceous plants in the corridor. Many are non-native weeds, but there are also such species as Great White Trillium, Golden Ragwort, Yellow Pimpernel, Virginia Waterleaf, Wild Ginger, Woodland Phlox and wild Strawberry are present.

Fauna

Mammals along the corridor include the red and grey fox squirrels, songbirds, pheasants and the occasional partridge. White Tail deer are plentiful and often use the trail for a path during winter. Other species include raptors such as red tail hawks, kestrels, great horned owls, barred owls, Cooper's hawks, goshawks and screech owls. Along waterways, heron and egrets are common as

well as the occasional Sandhill Crane. Some of these birds are migrants and therefore are incidental sightings or nesters.

A six-hour survey in 2001 near the Wisconsin / Illinois border yielded 77 bird species. Included in the list were two herons and an egret, a Semipalmated Plover, Short-billed Dowitchers, five species of flycatchers, four species of swallows, nine species of warblers and six species of sparrows. Also include was a Mourning Warbler, a Sedge Wren and a pair of Sandhill Cranes. The Great Egret is a Special Concern species.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION TRENDS

The Badger State Trail corridor begins in one of the fastest growing, densely populated, yet livable, urban areas in Wisconsin[3]. Each community situated near the corridor saw population levels rise from 1990-2004. Substantial growth occurred just south of Madison, specifically in the cities of Verona (39.53%), Fitchburg (28.97%) and the Village of Belleville (28.66%). No community saw a decrease in population levels and none are predicted by 2015.

RECREATION RESOURCES

Connection to Other State Trails
The Badger State Trail provides a link with numerous other trail systems, forming a major regional trail network in Southern Wisconsin and connecting cities and villages in Dane and Green counties.

Capital City State Trail
The Capital City State Trail connects with the Badger State Trail in southern Wisconsin, northwest of Fitchburg. The Capital City State Trail goes around and through Madison. The asphalt surface is excellent for bicycling, walking, jogging, and in-line skating. At this time, approximately seventeen miles of the Capital City State Trail is completed.

Military Ridge State Trail
This 41-mile trail from Madison to Dodgeville follows an old military road and intersects the Badger State Trail in southern Madison. The limestone-surfaced trail provides for hiking and biking along the entire trail, and the segment between Verona and Madison is blacktopped and also usable by in-line skaters.

Glacial Drumlin State Trail
The Glacial Drumlin State Trail is a 51-mile long trail through glacial landscapes between Waukesha and Cottage Grove. Though no trail exists linking Madison to the Glacial Drumlin State Trail, users can arrive at the start of the trail in Cottage Grove via County Hwy BB, approximately six miles east of Madison.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail
The Badger State Trail will allow users to utilize certain portions of the Ice Age Trail. Specifically, the 4-mile section from Madison south to Verona, the 2.5 mile stretch in Brooklyn

[3] State of Wisconsin-Department of Administration, http://www.doa.state.wi.us/docs_view2.asp?docid3583

along the Brooklyn Wildlife Area, and the 12.5-mile section that helps form the Sugar River State Trail from Bump Rd. to Exeter Crossing Rd.

Sugar River State Trail
This 24-mile stretch follows the Sugar River between New Glarus and Broadhead and is part of the Ice Age National Trail from Bump Rd. to Exeter Crossing Rd. Intersection with the Badger State Trail occurs in the Village of Monticello. This limestone-surfaced trail is used for both hikers and bikers.

Cheese Country Recreation Trail
This 47-mile trail links Monroe to Mineral Point. It is shared with ATVs, motorcycles, 4-wheel drive vehicles, equestrian riders, biking and hiking. The Cheese Country Trail is accessible for Badger State Trail users in the town of Monroe.

Connection to State Parks

The Badger State Trail will allow users to visit numerous State Parks in southern Wisconsin. This could lead to higher attendance in State parks and essentially higher revenue.

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area (CSCSPRA)
Just south of Madison, CSCSPRA is approximately 3,000 acres stretching from Fish Hatchery Rd. east to Lake Waubesa, and includes most of the Nine Springs E-Way. Though not completed, CSCSPRA will join Dane County's Lake Farm Park and other state land.

New Glarus Woods State Park
Approximately three miles west of the Badger State Trail lies this 431-acre state park. Camping, hiking, and picnicking are available as well as six trails totaling 7.3 miles and ranging from 0.2 miles to 4.2 miles. Direct access is also available to the Sugar River State Park Trail.

Browntown-Cadiz Springs State Park and Recreation Area
Five miles west of the Badger State Trail, this state park is 644 acres. The two spring-fed lakes, Beckman and Zander, form the focal point of most activities at the recreation area. Fishing, swimming, and the lake's beach are all popular activities and attractions.

Wildlife and Natural Areas Near the Corridor

Brooklyn Wildlife Area
Existing in both Dane and Green Counties, the Brooklyn Wildlife Area is approximately 2 miles off the Badger State Trail. This large (3,938 acres) area provides habitat for multiple species of wildlife and users can hike, trout fish, and birdwatch.

Recreation Resources in Illinois

Jane Addams Trail
The Jane Addams Trail is a 12.85 mile multi use that connects to the Wes Block Trail which connects to Freeport Illinois. Permitted uses on the trail include hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. Uses not permitted include horses, motorcycles, ATVs and motor vehicles.

Grand Illinois Trail
A planned 500 mile series of trails between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, the Grand Illinois Trail joins together existing and proposed state and local trails to create the state's longest continuous trail. It hugs historic canals, crosses unglaciated hills, parallels the Rock and Fox Rivers, and includes one of America's first rail-trails.

Freeport, IL
The Freeport Park District manages eight parks, a nature preserve, and a wetlands preserve covering more than 770 acres.

Trail Recreational Activities

Listed below in Table 3 are the average south central Wisconsin region participation rates for selected trail related activities for persons ages 16 and above. Human powered / pedestrian based activities are the most popular forms of trail recreation.

Table 3: South Central Wisconsin Trail Related Recreation Participation*

Activity	*Percent Participating Age 16+*
Walk for Pleasure	88.6%
Bicycling	53%
Day Hiking	38%
Running / Jogging	32.1%
Mountain Biking	30.9%
Rollerblading**	20%
ATV -Off Road	15.2%
Snowmobiling	10.1%
Horseback Riding on trails	9.3%
XC Skiing	7.3%
Snowshoeing	3.5%

** Draft 2005-2010 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*
*** Statewide Average*

Counties and Communities Along the Badger State Trail

As shown in Map A the trail makes connections to many communities along the corridor. These connections allow the trail to act as a connector to tie together the recreational, but also social aspects of these communities.

Table 4: Distances Between Communities

From	To	Distance
Madison	Basco	9 miles
Basco	Belleville	5.5 miles
Belleville	Monticello	9 miles
Monticello	Monroe	11 miles
Monroe	Clarno (State Line)	5.5 miles

Conclusion

The Badger State Trail is in the unique position to provide outdoor experiences, environmental and cultural education, and recreation to a large portion of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

This one trail will connect users to five other state trails, over varying topography and vegetation, encompassing approximately 200 miles. Users can easily visit four state parks with numerous recreational activities, and three wildlife/natural areas with opportunities for unique wildlife viewing. Recreational users of the trail will be provided the opportunity to visit more than thirteen different communities in southern WI and Northern IL offering a wide array of cultural history as well as other recreational opportunities.

Chapter Four – Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Master Plan

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the potential primary and secondary environmental effects of the proposed management plan. Chapter 2 of this document describes the proposed action or preferred management alternative. An analysis of the environmental effects or impacts is an important element of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the master plan. The intent of the EA is to disclose the environmental effects of an action (the master plan) to decision-makers and the public and to determine if the action would have a significant impact on the human environmental that would require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. The EA in the master plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) and Chapter NR 150 of Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Environmental Effects and Their Significance (long-term and short-term)

IMPACTS ON AIR QUALITY

During construction periods, dust may be present in the air surrounding project areas. Application of water from tank trucks is a common dust suppression practice that is used during highway construction. This technique may be appropriate for this trail project. Impacts on air quality, whether from fugitive dust particles or from exhaust emissions from construction equipment engines, would be finite and transitory in nature. When construction is complete, no residual impacts to air quality will be detectable.

Snowmobiles may cause limited, local air quality impacts near the corridor. Large numbers of snowmobiles are not expected within the corridor, and with the advent of 4 stroke motors being used in new snowmobiles these impacts should be limited as older machines are being replaced.

In addition, limited ATV use may also cause limited, local air quality impacts. The use is being proposed on 11 miles of trail, which will limit overall impacts. Large numbers of ATVs are not expected within the corridor, and with the advent of 4 stoke motors air pollution will be minimized.

Since this trail is also intended as a pedestrian commuter corridor, it is possible that surrounding air quality will improve as less vehicle miles will be driven in lieu of more bicycle miles ridden to work and other functions.

IMPACTS ON GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Wells, Use of Groundwater

Two potable water wells would be drilled to serve the proposed trail facilities. None of the wells would individually qualify as high-capacity wells, Because of the dispersed nature of these wells along the trail; the effect on the local water table is expected to be minimal.

IMPACTS ON SURFACE WATER RESOURCES

An increase in impervious surface area from trail improvements will occur. The hard surface trail would be the main sources of sheet runoff. There will also be some runoff from the pervious trail sections. All runoff from the path surfaces would be directed away from draining directly into nearby streams and lakes, thus minimizing any risks of water pollution from spilled or water-transported materials.

IMPACTS ON GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

New drilled potable water wells would penetrate the underlying bedrock in some places, but all wells would be drilled and installed according to state well drilling code, effectively minimizing any risk. Some rock excavation may be necessary for development of roads, parking lots, and facility foundations. Surface mining of rock is not anticipated.

IMPACTS ON VISUAL/SCENIC RESOURCES

Little if any impacts are expected on visual/ scenic resources. Any new recreational structures such as shelters and buildings will be designed to harmonize with the natural surroundings of the trail landscape.

Vegetative management along the trail corridor will change the appearance in some sections. A number of hazardous trees and shrubs will need to be removed to allow for trail construction. This will improve the vistas to and from the trail corridor and should allow for more scenic vistas for the trail user.

The newly constructed trail signs would be the only outward signs of the trail existence evident mainly in communities surrounding the trail. Directional signs placed on nearby public roads directing visitors to the trail would also present a new visual element.

IMPACTS ON LAND USE

The main impact would be an anticipated increase in the level of active recreation along the trail corridor.

Most neighboring land use along the trail corridor is agriculture, residential, recreational, or commercial. Some areas of commercial business development also exist. It is not unlikely that some increase in service sector business could occur as spin-off of trail development. It is anticipated that some growth in recreation-oriented business development would take place in the vicinity the trail. Local planning and zoning codes would regulate such development.

IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

The trail within the city limits of Madison has become a major commuter corridor. It is anticipated that as Fitchburg grows south of Madison that this will continue to serve as a daily travel to work corridor.

Local traffic coming to the trail corridor is not anticipated to increase as most users will ride their bike from their house or use existing park and recreation facilities as trailheads.

The trail is expected to be a generator of solid waste. Wisconsin State Parks promote and participate in recycling programs to mitigate generation of non-recyclable material that must be disposed of in sanitary landfills. A licensed sanitary waste contractor will be hired to pick up recyclable waste and non-recyclable materials. The Wisconsin State Park System "Adopt-A-Trail" program should be promoted to assist in keeping the corridor clean and litter free.

IMPACTS OF NOISE

Construction noise resulting from capital improvements such as trail building, vegetation management, shelter construction, and the like could have a moderate, temporary impact on the trails neighbors and wildlife. All of these groups could be sensitive to this disruption, especially during warm weather when windows may be open. This noise would be peak (high level, short duration) during construction periods, rather than continuous.

The presence and activities of trail visitors may present a potential for reaction from neighbors or other park visitors and thus may have some impact.

Seasonal noise generated with snowmobiles and ATV's may have a negative impact on neighboring properties. But these uses will take place during the winter when neighboring properties will have windows and doors closed, so noise impacts should be minimal. Since snowmobiles are currently allowed within the corridor there have been no complaints from the existing land owners.

IMPACTS ON RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The establishment of a 40 mile long recreation trail will increase hiking, biking, rollerblading and wildlife observation opportunities in the Dane and Green Counties.

The establishment of non-road paved bicycle trail in the region will add significantly to the supply of trails in the region. This master plans regional analysis information shows demand is high for the activities within the region.

The routing of snowmobiles along the corridor will decrease the risk level of the trails running along roadways.

IMPACTS ON HUMAN HEALTH

By providing a trail that allows for increased exercise and aerobic activities, there will be a positive benefit to individual users and the community. Increased outdoor exercise has been shown to reduce individual weight, increase overall endurance and allow for better cognitive skills.

IMPACTS ON BIOTIC RESOURCES

Vegetative management prescriptions proposed for the approximately 100 feet of trail corridor would have the effect of changing the structure and composition of the existing forest stands. Vegetative management within the trail corridor would include removal of trees for construction, supplemental planting of new vegetation for landscape purposes, and the removal of hazardous trees when the need arises. The effect of this management would be a gradual reduction in understory density and a more open appearance in designated use areas.

In the short –term, little, if any, change would be noticed. Some of the natural processes occurring may be considered "unsightly," though these will be in the more remote and inaccessible parts of the corridor. They would, at times, be visible from the trail.

In most cases, the vegetative management of the trail would be passive. Dead and downed trees that have fallen through natural causes would be removed form the trail grade, but left for interrelated insect and mammal habitat. These will not be removed unless they are determined to be a hazard. The anticipated effect of this management would be a slow succession to climax species and old growth conditions over a period of several hundred years.

In the longer term, there would be dead and downed trees in various stages of decomposition, serving as hosts for a multitude of creatures. The forest canopy would take on a dense character, and gaps in the canopy from fallen trees would eventually be filled by the growth of other trees of the same community. Trees in every stage of life, from seedling to maturity, would be growing together.

While the passive or natural succession method of vegetative management would not necessarily have the direct effect of exacerbating forest pest outbreaks, such as gypsy moth, oak wilt, or forest tent caterpillar, the overall impact might be greater due to relatively weaker health of individual trees. Reactive measures, such as sanitation, root pruning, or pesticide or herbicide application could still be taken if an acute infestation were discovered. These proactive measures, in consultation with Forestry could result as a wholesale conversion to less appetizing tree species in the short term, but in the long run will be beneficial to the trail corridor

Exotic Plants

A program of regular monitoring and inspection for other invasive exotic species should also be implemented. This program should be stated during the construction phase. Both aquatic and terrestrial species are included. Some common invasive exotics that would be monitored are purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, spotted knapweed, tatarian honeysuckle, buckthorn, and black locust and wild parsnip. Department policies in place that address these threats to the resource base will be followed. Control measures appropriate to the species of invasive would be used.

These may include manual harvesting, plowing, use of herbicides or poisonous agents, fire, and natural predators. The effect would be a purifying of the biotic community and a protection from future invasions. It is possible that equestrian use may cause the spread of invasives along a small portion of the trail corridor. Efforts will be taken to work with the equestrian groups on control of invasives through education and manual removal such as trail work days.

IMPACTS ON ENDANGERED OR THREATENED SPECIES

At this time, no state or federally listed endangered species are recorded for Badger State Trail indicated in the records. The great egret is listed as special concern species, and the trail will continue to provide habitat for this specie. As a result of this plan, federal and state endangered, threatened, or special-concern species that may be discovered or occur in the future will receive long-term protection and enhancement through the property's management.

IMPACTS ON HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGIC FEATURES

The ¼ mile long tunnel located in Exeter Township is a historic structure, although it is not yet on the Register of Historic Places. Inspections of the tunnel found significant deterioration of the tunnel lining from freezing and thawing during winter months. The Department and the State Historical Society have determined that a historic restoration of the interior with a brick lining would be impractical and unsustainable. The interior of the tunnel will be relined with stamped concrete to give the appearance of a brick lining. This relining will not precluded being on the Register of Historic Places. The entrance of the tunnel will remain historic in appearance and will be closed during winter months to avoid further deterioration. Available records show that no other archaeological sites have been documented within the trail corridor. This does not preclude the possibility of future discoveries, however.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The anticipated increase in tourist numbers will increase utilization of local business establishments. Economic benefits are anticipated to result from the influx of users to the trail. Recent data indicate that, in the Southwestern region of Wisconsin, local resident nonmotorzied trail users contribute an average of $4.02 per day to the economy, while non-local non motorized trail visitors contribute an average of $32.83 per day. Motorized trail users on average spend $163.54 a day. Combining these uses and anticipating an annual usage to the trail when fully developed from 100,000 to 175,000 people per year will result in an economic impact of approximately $2.1 million a year.

Benefits during construction of the trail and its components would accrue to building trade members and laborers and suppliers, some of which may be local. Competitive bidding procedures will be followed. Total development cost for the park is expected to amount to several million dollars at completion, though the actual work may be spread over a considerable span of time. No estimate of dollar amounts to the local area is available, as extent of local contractor involvement is not yet known.

Employees working at the trail would probably live in the vicinity of the park. Those employees would participate in the local economy and expend a significant amount on their daily needs as members of the community.

FISCAL EFFECTS – STATE GOVERNMENT

Lands purchased for addition to the trail would likely be acquired using State Stewardship funds or a similar bonding fund. Similarly, bonding programs fund the development of much of Wisconsin's State Park System. The cost to the state of bonding for land acquisition and project development occurs when the interest or dividends must be paid on the bonds. Several methods of making these payments could be used, the main one being General Program Revenue (GPR).

The Wisconsin State Park program budgets for its capital development needs on a biennial basis, as do all state agencies. Because of the significant cost of developing of this trail corridor, funding priorities within the capital budget would necessarily be adjusted to accommodate building the trail. Without an increase in capital spending authority, construction of the trail could cause temporary delay or deferral of implementation of other state park projects.

Estimated Costs of Development

Note: Costs for the development of trail are based on 2005 dollar-values and assume full completion of all proposed construction. In actuality, work may be phased over several state capital biennial budget cycles.

Northern Section

Development Cost:

Bridge decking and railing	completed in 2004
Trail signing	completed in 2004
Asphalt Pavement (7.1miles)	$ 931,000
Grade Separated Crossing (CTH PD)	$ 1,250,000
Access Ramp (Sun Valley Parkway)	$ 100,000
Design & Supervision (12%)	$ 273,720
Contingency (7%)	$ 159,670
Total	$ 2,714,390

Southern Section

Development Cost:

Informational/directional signing (on roadways)	$ 100,000
Tunnel Restoration	$ 330,000
Clarno rest area	$ 75,000
Bridge decking and railing	completed in 2004
Signing	completed in 2004
Surfacing Limestone-32.9 miles (Material & Installation)	$ 600,000
Drainage corrections	$ 422,200
Management fees	$ 125,600
Contingency (7%)	$ 71,600
State HWY 11 crossing	$ 30,000
Total	$ 1,754,400

GRAND TOTAL ESTIMATED COST **$ 4,468,790**

Estimated Costs of Land Acquisition

DNR policy is to purchase land only from willing sellers. The purchase price is set by an appraisal prepared in compliance with state and national guidelines, unless the seller chooses to make a gift or partial donation of land.

The master plan recommends very little additional land be acquired for addition to Badger State Trail. The approximately 4-5 acres of land that would be added to the trail boundary would be

valued at an average of $3,000 per acre if acquired all at once using present day values. Individual parcel values would vary depending on whether any improvements or buildings existed on the site as well as the individual qualities of the site. It is unlikely that all tracts within the proposed boundary would be available for acquisition simultaneously, so expenditures would be spread over a considerable span of time, perhaps many years.

Projected Staffing Needs and Estimated Annual Operations Cost

Operational costs associated with the Badger State Trail are the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources. Based on past experience with other trails, annual operations costs range on average from $1500 to $2000 per mile per year. Therefore, DNR annual operation costs are estimated at $65,000 per year. This includes 1 FTE Ranger – Enforcement position and 2 LTE Laborer positions to provide visitor protection, law enforcement and maintenance as well as supplies and services for trail maintenance.

Revenue Projections

The State Trail Pass will be the main revenue sources of the new trail. Two other recreation trails in the Region with similar size and use are: Military Ridge State Trail and the Glacial Drumlin State Trail. It is estimated that this trail will generate approximately $100,000 a year in trail pass sales.

FISCAL EFFECTS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Fiscal effects will be minimal in association with local governments. Since this corridor is already in state ownership, little, if any fiscal impacts will be felt by local governments

If any additional property is acquired for this project on lands purchased by the DNR since January 1992, the "property value base," used to calculate payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), must be equal to or greater than estimated fair market value on a parcel for the year of purchase (s.s. 70.114). The purchase price is determined by an appraisal, which is completed by a certified general private or DNR staff appraiser. The year after the initial PILT payment year, and in all future tax years in which the DNR owns the parcel, its "property value base" is adjusted based on the change in land values in the municipality where the property is located. If the value in the municipality goes up 10%, the value of DNR land is adjusted upward 10%. For example, if the DNR purchased 1,000 acres located in a the Town of Stephenson in January 1992 for $1,000/acre, the DNR would assume the normal tax bill for tax year 1992, and then, in 1993, the 1,000 acres would be listed as tax exempt status and receive a PILT. If the 1993 assessment level on land in the Town of Stephenson increased and land were now at $1,500/acre, an increase of 50% (or 1.5 multiplied times the original "property value base"), the Department would adjust its "property value base" and make the PILT payments based on that figure to the taxing jurisdictions in the Town of Stephenson—thus realizing the same assessment level adjustment as that of other private landowners in the town. Likewise, if the assessment in the Township went up in the following year, the Department would adjust the PILT payment accordingly (Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau report).

The anticipated increase in traffic on local roadways near the trail may slightly increase road maintenance costs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The cumulative effects from the preferred alternative for the Badger State Trail would have a long-term positive effect on the quality of the human environment. In particular, the public has recognized the need to preserve rail corridors to benefit future generations. They have demonstrated this support verbally and in writing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RISK

Management and development of the Badger State Trail is a low overall potential for risk to the environment since this was a graded railbed and most impacts associated with this were done during the original construction of the corridor.

The presence of motor vehicles and other equipment during the construction phase may pose an increased risk from spills and erosion. These risks would be mitigated by plans and procedures put in place in the bid documents and at the preconstruction meeting with contractors.

Risk to the resources of the site resulting from human activity during normal operation of trail is mitigated by emergency action plans put in place by park management staff. These plans are reviewed annually and updated as needed or when circumstances change.

Risk of introduction of invasive exotic species may increase due to public use of the trail. Plans and strategies, as described Chapter 2, are in place to prevent and control outbreaks and infestations.

Fire has been identified as a possible vegetative management tool, especially for the prairie restoration sites recommended by the master plan. Necessary precautions are always followed during prescribed burns, including having fire-fighting equipment and personnel present on site. During periods of high fire danger, restrictions are put into effect. During exceptionally dry weather, a complete fire ban may be implemented. The Town of Stephenson Fire Department provides fire protection at a distance of about four miles. Additional protection during high fire danger periods is available from a DNR fire control unit stationed in the vicinity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRECEDENT

Approval of this management plan would not significantly influence future decisions on other Department property master plans as all recreational use described are currently allowed within other Department trail systems.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTROVERSY OVER ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Disagreement over Recreational Style, Uses Allowed or not Allowed

Some individuals have advocated for the use of "speeder cars". Many "speeder car" enthusiasts favored leaving the railroad tracks in place so they could continue to drive these vehicles on the tracks. Since this was an unauthorized use of the corridor, the WDOT made the decision to remove the tracks in favor of converting the corridor to a recreational trail. After DNR, WDOT and the Rail Transit Commission reached an agreement regarding conversion of the corridor from rail to trail, public opinion switched in support of the recreational trail.

The most recent controversial issue relates to ATV use on the entire trail. This draft master plan recommends that ATV's will be allowed use on 11 miles of the Badger State Trail. This recommendation is based on the criteria of maintaining user safety, protecting the natural resources, compatibility of different uses, and providing a high-quality user experience. In addition, ATV opportunities already exist with in the Tri County Trail System that includes 57 miles of public trail plus another approximate 40 miles of ATV Club trails for public use.

Horseback Riding was also considered within the entire trail. This master plan recommends up to 2 miles of trail be established within the corridor. Because the Badger State Trail corridor topography is a mix of upland, wetland, rock outcroppings, cattle passes and river/creek crossings making it impractical to develop a contiguous trail within the corridor, loop system will be developed with public / private partnerships. In addition horseback riding on public lands are available at both Yellowstone Lake Wildlife Area located approximately 18 miles away and at Donald County Park located approximately 6 miles for the trail corridor. There are also 57 miles of public trail available for horse use on the Tri County Trail system.

Considerable public involvement has been solicited and obtained in preparation of the feasibility study and draft master plan for the Badger State Trail. DNR staff has met numerous times with all involved local officials, service organizations and has held public comment forums. The consensus has been one of strong local support for the trail.

CONCLUSIONS

Implementation of master plan recommendations for management and development of Badger State Trail would provide positive recreational, ecological, social, and economic benefits to the region by providing a trail that linking communities and providing easy access to outdoor recreation.

Chapter Five – Alternatives and Their Environmental Impacts

A master plan alternative is a grouping of a number of compatible options for resource management, recreational development, and public use of a Department property. The content of an alternative should be compatible with the property designation, the draft vision and goals, the property capabilities, and the regional analysis. The alternatives summarized below are the most recent set of alternatives that were considered as part of the planning effort.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Alternative One: Status Quo. Under this alternative, the rail corridor would be retained by the WDOT in its present state and would not be converted into a public recreational trail for biking, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing. State and interstate trail linkage opportunities would be lost. Adjacent encroaching land uses would continue and could possibly accelerate.

Alternative Two: ATV usage on the full corridor. ATV use was considered on the full corridor. Because of expected pedestrian demand and possible enforcement issues with this alternative, and the fact that ATV's can create unsafe conditions for bikers and hikers just by the nature of how ATV's operate and since the corridor is not wide enough to accommodate multiple trail treads this alternative was not considered feasible. In addition the Tri County Trail System includes 57 miles of public ATV trail use plus another approximately 40 miles of ATV Club trails for public use just outside the trail corridor.

Alternative Three: Equestrian use on the full corridor. This alternative was considerated as an option for the entire corridor. There was consideration that this corridor could become part of a larger regional trail network. But because of limitations such as wetlands, rock outcroppings, cattle passes and river/creek crossings this makes it impractical to develop a contiguous trail near or within the corridor. Equestrian riding is also available with the region which offers a much better experience for this use. These public lands include Yellowstone Lake Wildlife Area located approximately 18 miles to the west and at Donald County Park located approximately 6 miles from the trail corridor. There are also 57 miles of public trail available for horse use on the Tri County Trail system. Because of the numerous equestrian opportunities this alternative was not considered further.

Alternative Four: Preferred Alternative - year round pedestrian use, limited winter snowmobile and ATV use, and limited equestrian use within the trail corridor. This alternative was chosen as the preferred option. There is enough length within the corridor to accommodate all pedestrian uses. Winter time use will consist of snowmobiles which will allow for a regional connector to other established trails both in Dane and Green County. A three year winter ATV pilot period will be in place for evaluation. After this evaluation period a determination will take place on permanent continuation of this use. The ATV section will be able to connect to the Tri-County Trail system that will allow for an extension of this network. This alternative will allow for the best and most flexible use of the trail corridor while meeting the demands of the increasing urban populations at the Northern end of the trail plus motorized use.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Alternative One: No cutting management except for safety. This option will only remove hazardous trees within the corridor. This would allow for limited cutting and would not allow the user to enjoy vistas along the trail.

Alternative Two: Preferred Alternative - more active cutting for vista openings. This alternative would allow for removal of some canopy for the opening of vistas along the corridor. This would mainly involve removing invasive species while leaving the native coverage when possible. This will also allow for hazardous tree removal where needed. This alternative is preferred as it will allow the user to enjoy the rural landscape that is unique to this area.

REAL ESTATE AND BOUNDARY ALTERNATIVES

Alternative One: No additional land acquisition. This alternative would allow no land acquisition beyond what is already owned and designated as Badger State Trail. The impact of this alternative would be a cessation of land acquisition. Lands recommended in the master plan for acquisition would not be acquired. This would not allow for the trail to make connections to adjacent communities.

Alternative Two: Preferred Alternative - acquire more land as recommended in the plan. This alternative would allow for limited expansion of the existing boundary and allow for small parcels to be obtained. By doing this, connections can be made to the nearby communities. This will also allow for limited development when needed. This is the preferred alternative, as it will allow for moderate expansion of the existing corridor.

Chapter Six – Summary of Public Involvement

The planning process for the Badger State Trail began in 1997 with the compilation of the feasibility study. Between 1997 and 2000 DNR staff attended numerous listening sessions with private individuals, special interest groups and local government officials about converting the rail corridor to a recreational trail. Staff from DNR also attended meetings organized by local units of government to discuss use of the corridor.

CHRONOLOGY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public informational open houses were held in September, 1998 in Fitchburg and Monroe to gather input on the recommendations developed in the feasibility study.

The Natural Resources Board approved the feasibility study in March, 2000.

In October, 2001, DNR held a meeting with local and state representatives of the ATV associations. The intent of the meeting was to acknowledge the need and demand for ATV facilities in the southern Wisconsin and to discuss alternatives.

In November, 2001 the City of Monroe held a public input session. Approximately 45 participants attended and provided input on trail use issues. Most of the input centered on their desire to get the trail completed. Most were in favor of uses compatible with the uses on the Illinois Jane Addams Trail. There were 4 people at the meeting in favor of accommodating ATV's on the trail corridor.

Also in November, 2001 the Village of Belleville held public input session. Approximately 30 participants attended. Most the input at this meeting was centered on the type of trail surface, i.e. limestone vs. blacktop. Most of the participants were from snowmobile clubs and were against blacktop pavement of the trail. There were 3 individuals in favor of horse use and another 4 people were in favor of accommodating ATV's on the corridor.

In addition, several meetings were also held with local service organizations, the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, the Green County Board, the Southern Wisconsin Rail Transit Commission and other recreational user groups and individuals.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Project Name: Badger State Trail County: Dane, Green

DECISION (This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate authority)

In accordance with s. 1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Adm. Code, the Department is authorized and required to determine whether it has complied with s.1.11, Stats., and Ch. NR 150, Wis. Adm. Code.

Complete either A or B below:

A. EIS Process Not Required ☒

The attached analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department.

B. Major Action Requiring the Full EIS Process ☐

The proposal is of such magnitude and complexity with such considerable and important impacts on the quality of the human environment that it constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

If you believe that you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin statutes establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed.

For judicial review of a decision pursuant to sections 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed, or otherwise served by the Department, to file your petition with the appropriate circuit court and serve the petition on the Department. Such a petition for judicial review shall name the Department of Natural Resources as the respondent.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 227.48(2), Stats.